

# 2010 Military Health System Conference

## Lessons Learned: CoE Support to Families and Wounded Through a Patient-Centered Approach

Sharing Knowledge: Achieving Breakthrough Performance

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January 25, 2010



Joint DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence

# VCE Background



- The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 directed the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of military eye injuries.

# Caregiver support



- Caregivers across the DoD and VA provide a vital service and are an important resource for the VCE; many need assistance in the form of education and training, respite and support groups to reduce stress and burden.

# VCE Care Coordination Support



- Establishment of Regional Clinical Centers
- Creation of Care Coordinator Liaison positions

# Vision Support Cells



- Provide rehabilitation and low vision care services
- Point of contact for transition from DoD to VA
- Goal: To establish Vision Support Cells across the country

# Transition to VA medical facility



- For those patients who are transitioning from a DoD medical facility to a VA medical facility, and their families, support from a Federal Care Recovery Coordinator is necessary to assure a smooth sharing of medical information between providers and support information for the patient and his/her family.

# Meeting Patient Needs



- Systems will be designed around the needs of patients, improving care coordination and virtual access through enhanced secure messaging, social networking, telehealth, and telephone access.

# VA Visual Impairment Support Services



- Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator:
  - Case manager responsible for coordinating services for visually impaired Veterans, and their families
  - Identifies new cases of severe visual impairment, refers for services, provides adjustment counseling, arranges reviews of benefits and health care, assist Veterans and Servicemembers with guide dog applications and support

# VA Visual Impairment Support Services (cont.)



- Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST):
  - Local teams of medical professionals who ensure that severely disabled visually impaired Veterans are identified, evaluated, and provided services to maximize adjustment to sight loss
  - Ongoing lifetime case management at local VA medical center
  - Liaison with Military Treatment Facilities for Servicemembers receiving services

# VCE Efforts



- Blind Rehabilitation specialist detailed to VCE pending appointment of permanent staff member
- A collaborative process has been developed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) for blind rehabilitation care while Servicemembers are still receiving DoD care

# Collaboration with Paralympics



- Partnership with U.S. Association of Blind Athletes
- Assist in the establishment of an MOU with U.S. Paralympics Military Division

# What the wounded ask?



- “Please don’t start by telling me what you are going to do to me.”
- “Listen to me first.”
- “Please believe what I tell you.”

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